



NEWSLETTER

Issue No.1, September 2005

Global Connections and Exchange Program for Tajikistan

Global Connections and Exchange Program for Tajikistan has established 24 Internet Learning Centers (ILCs) in secondary schools across Tajikistan. The program's main goal is to increase global dialogue and educational opportunities by installing modern computer equipment with Internet access in schools, and developing training and learning projects for teachers and students.

Tajikistan Global Connections and Exchange Program activities include:

- * Teacher training on using computers and the Internet in classroom teaching;
- * U.S. school partnerships on civic education projects, teacher and student exchanges;
- * Public access and programs for community members and disadvantaged groups;
- * Development of sustainable practices for schools and communities.

C O N T E N T



Students from Khujand ILC preparing board about their partner school

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Getting to Know You

The very first Global Connections partnership activity between the Tajik ILCs and American schools gave students from both countries the chance to introduce themselves and present interesting things about their country and community.

By participating in this activity Tajik students prepared presentations about themselves, lessons in Tajikistan schools, famous things about their cities, different craftsmanship that still exist and are popular in their country, and rare animals and plants of Tajikistan.

Once Tajikistan and U.S. schools exchanged their presentations, and "met" each other through the information shared, they participated in an online forum to ask more questions and discuss presentations. Based on information the students learned in the forum, each ILC project group made informational boards about their partner school.

U.S. Students throughout the nation began a new school year ready to collaborate with their peers in Tajikistan! Their teachers participating in Global Connections had the opportunity to get to know their partner teacher abroad before the beginning of the school year by exchanging teacher profiles and contact information with the help of RI-SOL. This initial contact before the starting of the school year allows for teachers to develop a strong relationship and prepare for a full year of collaboration. U.S. Teacher Steve Bsharah reports he and his partner teacher in Tajikistan communicate 3 to 4 times a week! With this the first U.S. – Tajikistan introduction project got under way successfully.

Camino Nuevo High School's students in Los Angeles California, a new school to the program this year, did a great job on their introductory presentation. The student's final product was a very informative PowerPoint presentation, with well developed personal introductions on each students participating in the program. What a great way to introduce themselves!

With new schools such as Camino Nuevo High School and the great group of other school participating for a second year a row we are excited to start this school year off! We are all looking forward for the projects and exchanges to come. Presentations can be viewed at http://www.connect_tajikistan.org/en/getting_to_know_you.html

Youth Leadership Clubs



Election of YLC leader

During the whole month of September, ILC managers worked on organizing student clubs in the schools, including English Club, Web Design, and Art & Photography. Another one of the clubs that was established are the Youth Leadership Clubs where student leaders each school work together for the better life of their school and community.

Each YLC elected its "Leader", who is responsible for organizing different activities. The effectiveness of the future work of the club is supported by its leaders, so the election of the YLC leaders was important. Guidelines for election processes was followed by students under the ILC manager supervision. Finally, the leaders were chosen and everybody now is delighted to start the work!

The plan for September was to try to find out about Leadership. Participants conducted research on famous Tajik and foreign leaders, and described why they have chosen this leader and what specific things they have done for their country. This way students learned what leadership skills they need to obtain, and have started to conduct trainings on Leadership in other schools.

Youth Leaders Collecting White Gold

Autumn in Tajikistan is a harvest time when everything – fruit, vegetables, wheat and cotton are getting ripe and need to be collected in time. And there is often a lack of hands in the fields, so collective farmers always welcome the support of students.

This September students of the Youth Leadership Club from ILC of Chorbogh School No. 40 helped farmers of their village to collect cotton. It was an idea of Sarvinoz Akhtamova, YLC senior leader.

Every day after school, from September 20th, a youth leaders in the 9th-11th grades would go to the village farm to work with others collecting cotton. The head of the collective farm and the farmers were very happy to know that there are such active students in their community.

Every day youth leaders collected 400-500 kg of cotton and totally they harvested 2 tons of cotton which was a great support for the village farm.

Youth Leaders are very happy that they found a way to help their community and in the future they will be coming with more and more ideas to help the community they live in.



Chorbogh leaders collecting white gold

Announcement for GCEP Logo

Design the new GCEP logo! You can submit your works in any size (ex.8x10, 3x3, 1x2); 300dpi or greater resolution; designed in either Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, or InDesign; saved as PSD, AI, or Indd file; Grayscale or color

The deadline for submission is November 1st, 2005. Selection of winners will be done by November 7th, 2005 – prizes go to the first, second and third places.



U.S. Public Affairs Officer Visits ILCs



U.S. Public Affairs Officer
at ILC of school No.10

At the beginning of the new academic school year two RI-SOL ILCs received an honored guest from the U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan – Mr. Jon Larsen, new Public Affairs Officer.

Mr. Larsen visited ILCs in Dushanbe, School No. 10 and Kulob, Lyceum No. 1. In both ILCs Mr. Larsen met with project group students and had a discussion with them. Mr. Larsen told students from the Kulob ILC about American Corners - a resource center at the State University of Kulob. It is a place where students can find a range of information about the U.S. through different books, magazines and CDs. Mr. Larsen presented some of those magazines and CDs to the students so that they can enlarge their knowledge and widen their world vision about the USA.

Hurricane Katrina was the topic of activity for students at the Dushanbe ILC. Students were searching for information about Louisiana and Mississippi states, trying to identify the reasons and scale of this disaster. They were also learning about previous hurricanes which impacted these States, and also

looking for other countries in the world which are affected by such disasters. This project group asked Mr. Larsen about U.S. students in Louisiana and Mississippi, their morale and health, emphasizing that they share their grief with them.

U.S. Consular Officer Connects with ILCs

The Consular Officer for the U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan - Mr. Evan McCarthy visited one of our more remote ILCs located in Khorog city at School No.2. During his visit, Mr. McCarthy met with RI-SOL field staff and project group students who showed their best presentations prepared during program activities.

That day Mr. McCarthy engaged in discussions not only with Khorog students but also with all the GCEP students of Tajikistan. This was possible through an online chat. For about one hour Mr. McCarthy answered several questions from inquisitive students who were surprised by his excellent knowledge of Russian.

At the beginning of the chat, students offered condolences for the people in the Gulf Coast, and especially from New Orleans who fell victim to the hurricane. Then they began to ask different questions as students were interested to know Mr. McCarthy's personal point of view about Tajikistan, his opinions about our democracy, and education system: "I think Tajik schools are very strong. Of course, schools need lots of money and resources, and this will always be a problem. But the teachers and the schools are very good."

And of course students wanted to know more about schools and universities in the U.S.: how many American students after graduating a school or a college continue their study in the universities, what are the possibilities for students from other countries to get higher or distance education in the USA, and other such questions about higher education.

Another question was about what Tajikistan and the U.S. have in common. Talking about similarities between the U.S. and Tajikistan Mr. McCarthy expressed that : "There are many similarities between America and Tajikistan. America has been a democracy and a republic for over two hundred years and we had many, many problems. America also had a Civil War for four years and it is still the worst war in our history. It was long ago but Tajikistan is also like America. Soon it will grow into a strong, true democracy."

At the end students thanked Mr. McCarthy for the interesting and informative chat and wished to meet him online again. Immediately after the chat had ended, students and teachers requested more online chats to be conducted to increase interaction with others. We thank Mr. Evan McCarthy for his active participation and for helping to launch a new season of interactive online chats.



U.S. Consular Officer in
Khorog ILC

The Tajikistan Global Connections and Exchange Program for Central Asia is a project of Relief International - Schools Online's Global Citizenship & Youth Philanthropy Program and has been made possible with major funding from the United States State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Global Catalyst Foundation

E-Teacher Program



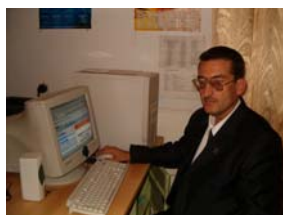
Zebo Murodova, ILC Manager in Sarband

Our warmest congratulations to Zebo Murodova, Ibrahimjon Rustamov and Abdulhamid Sharipov - the ILC Managers from Sarband, Isfara and Kulob cities who have been accepted to participate in the new "E-Teacher" program, a unique distance-learning initiative sponsored by the Office of English Language Programs of the U.S. Department of State. The competition was open for English Language teachers who were to choose one of the following courses: English for Law, English for Business, Teaching English for Young Learners, Assessment for EFL, and Teaching Critical Thinking. And as a result three teachers from Tajikistan have been selected to participate in this program who decided to take "Teaching English for Young

Learners", "Critical Thinking" and "English for Law" courses.

The program introduces the most recent English language teaching methods and techniques, offers the opportunity to engage in an innovative distance-learning program that employs the latest in modern technology, and provides direct access to U.S. experts.

Zebo Murodova will be participating in the "Teaching English to Young Learners" course, offered through the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. This course is designed to provide an overview of the latest research on TEYL and demonstrate effective classroom techniques by specifically addressing the needs of learners aged 7 to 12.



Abdulhamid Sharipov, ILC Manager in Kulob

Ibrahimjon Rustamov will be participating in the "Critical Thinking" course, offered through the University of Oregon. This course is designed to develop critical thinking skills and demonstrate how the techniques and materials of critical thinking can be applied to English-learning classrooms in the country.

Abdulhamid Sharipov will be participating in the "English for Law" course, offered through Nashville State Community College and the University of Memphis. This course will provide him with an extensive overview of the concepts behind the legal system in the United States and give a framework for teaching

English to professionals in the legal field by introducing the best current practices in the English for Specific Purposes field.

The course began in September and will run for 10 weeks. Participants who successfully complete the course will receive a certificate. So, we wish good luck and high results to our "young" students!



Ibrahim Rustamov, ILC Manager in Isfara

British Ambassador in Ayni

On September 16 2005 British Ambassador in Tajikistan Mr. Graeme Loten traveled to the mountainous Ayni district of Sugd region and visited the ILC that was opened with the support of the British Embassy, DFID Project. This ILC has been opened for a year, and the Ambassador observed the results of the work in the ILC, and its benefits for students, teachers and the community.

Exploring Education at Annual Fair

It has become a tradition of international organizations which run educational programs to meet once a year for the Annual Educational Fair. The goal of conducting such an event is to attract all interested people and organizations at one time and in one place to share necessary information about educational opportunities at home and abroad.

To offer this opportunity for people from all over Tajikistan it was decided to conduct the fair in Dushanbe, Khujand, Kulob and Kurgan-Tyube cities. Citizens of Dushanbe and Khujand have already participated in the fair on September 29th and October 1st respectively. As for the students of Kurgan-Tyube and Kulob, they are invited to visit the fair on October 27th and 28th.

The event is coordinated by the Open Society Institute (OSI), and this year participating organizations included (KIMEP), ACCELS, IREX, US Embassy, DAAD (German Embassy), Aga Khan Humanities Project, and Relief International – Schools Online. Representatives of these organizations presented information about their activities and programs, provided the visitors with handout materials and brochures and conducted lectures about international education. The visitors had an opportunity to meet with alumni students of different scholarship programs. Most importantly learners and educators alike were able to discover the various educational opportunities available in the country.

RI-SOL is participating in this fair for the second time. We presented our program, its goals and opportunities for pupils, university students and all the interested persons. Following the presentation of the Global Connections program at the fair the number of users at our ILCs has already increased, as was seen from the eager new students who arrived at the ILC of School No. 8 in Dushanbe after hearing about the program at the fair. Welcome new ILC users!



Staff and volunteers explaining GCEP to fair visitors

Success Story

Former project group member of the Internet Learning Center of Istaravshan, Abduahad Bokiev, is now spending an academic year in the USA.

Beginning from September 1st, 2004 Abduahad along with other students was encouraged to join the project group of Istaravshan ILC. Motivation and enormous desire of learning and gaining up-to-date knowledge obviously could be seen in him. As soon as we gave students a chance to express their goals and needs, Abduahad emphasized one of his greatest goals, which was becoming a finalist in the FLEX scholarship and experiencing academic and cultural life in, as he called it, "the country of my dreams". The target was clear, but he needed some concrete ways to improve his knowledge and skills, which could contribute to his initial educational objectives.

Gradually everyone was witnessing his discoveries and progress during the activities held in the ILC. He constantly was looking for unique opportunities to broaden his understanding and knowledge. He was quite sociable and an active team player. His attention to improve his American English increased day after day.

Taking into consideration his effort, interest, activeness, and reliability we decided to welcome him as a volunteer and gave him the chance to help in accomplishments of the ILC and not surprisingly he successfully fulfilled given projects.

Eventually, on one remarkable day Abduahad was notified that he was chosen as a FLEX finalist. Our enjoyment and happiness knew no boundaries as we heard of the news. Personally he recognizes the ILC as a wonderful resource center for enhancing his knowledge and helping him get to where he is today.

From that time on school students began to visit the ILC more often and their numbers were increasing. In the near future we are planning to provide a possibility for students to talk with Abduahad via the Internet and explore his experience and life in the U.S. We believe our ILC will continue to help school students, teachers, and community members to achieve their goals.

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At last we, on behalf of the project group members and other students, wish Abduahad a successful stay and experience and many other achievements in his personal and studious life.

- From Istaravshan ILC



Abduahad with his host brother in Illinois, U.S.